



PALESTINIAN PEOPLE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

U.S. funds occupation and murder

By Bill Dores

May 22 — Israeli's generals call it "mowing the grass." Joe Biden calls it "self-defense." For 11 terrible days and nights, Israel's made-in-the-USA air force rained the latest weapons of mass destruction on 2 million Palestinians imprisoned in the Gaza Strip. The targets were apartment blocks and refugee camps and everything people need to live. They were hit with high explosives, white phosphorous, dense inert metal explosives, vacuum bombs and types of bombs never used before.

U.S.-Israeli bombs and missiles "wrecked sewage systems and water pipes, damaged at least 17 hospitals and clinics, severely damaged or destroyed about 1,000 buildings and suspended operations at Gaza's only coronavirus testing laboratory," the New York Times reported May 21.

Israel destroyed 66 schools, Gaza's largest bookstore, a factory making water tanks, and 20 media offices. Roads leading to hospitals were bombed deliberately. At least 120,000 people lost their homes.

Entire families massacred

Seventy-five children are among at least 243 people murdered by Israel's U.S.-made F-16s and F-35s. The youngest, Omar Hamdi, was 5 months old. He died with his mother and three siblings. Only his father survived.

The eldest may have been Amin Muhammad al-Qoalaq. At age 90 he was older than the Israeli state. He died with three generations of his family when their home was obliterated by U.S.-Israeli bombs.

Dozens of families were wiped out as Israel's U.S.-trained and -paid pilots targeted homes in the middle of the night. Doctors Ayman and Raja 'Ouf died with 12 members of their family when four Israeli missiles targeted their house. Dr. Moein al-Aloul, 66, and journalist Yusuf Abu Hassan were also murdered when missiles hit their homes.

Israeli troops gun down unarmed protesters

Meanwhile Israeli troops, police and armed settlers on the West Bank — occupied in 1967 — and the rest of Palestine — occupied in 1948 — murdered unarmed Palestinians.

When he was 15, Obeida Jawabra was interviewed in an award-win-

ning short film about imprisoned Palestinian children. He had been detained three times. On May 17, he was shot to death by Israeli soldiers while protesting near the Aroub refugee camp, where he lived.

Muhammad Qiyani, 17, was one of two people from the city of Umm el Fahm, occupied in 1948, shot to death by undercover cops sitting in their cars. U.S. and Israeli police have joint training programs.

Palestine's blood on U.S. hands

The slaughter had the full support of the Biden administration and the U.S. political, military and corporate establishment. Biden spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu almost daily, allegedly urging "deescalation." But the U.S. repeatedly blocked efforts by the U.N. Security Council to meet and call for a ceasefire.

In public, Biden and other U.S. officials justified the massacre with the lie that "Israel has a right to defend itself." In truth, under international law, Palestinians and all occupied people have a right to resist occupation. Occupiers have no right to "self defense."

Hamas was elected!

While the U.S. supplies an endless flow of arms to the terrorists in Tel Aviv, Biden, like Republican and Democratic presidents before him, calls Hamas a "terrorist organization." Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, is in fact a political party that was chosen democratically by Palestinians in Gaza.

Ever since it was first elected, in 2006, Israel has imposed a brutal blockade on the people of Gaza, punishing them for exercising their democratic rights.

Hamas is working together with Islamic Jihad, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and other resistance organizations to defend the people of Gaza against siege and genocide.

When blood flows, money flows

On May 17, at the height of the massacre, Biden approved a \$739-million gift of new missile guidance systems to the racist Israeli state. Israeli occupation forces also have free access to weapons the Pentagon stockpiles in occupied Palestine.

Once the ceasefire was declared, Biden pledged to replenish Isra-



BALTIMORE

Palestine resistance supporters rally

By Sharon Black

Hundreds of Palestinian supporters filled the streets in downtown Baltimore following a rally at City Hall on May 24. Marching against traffic, the group blocked intersections to read the names of Palestinian martyrs who died in the recent attacks by Israel.

Rev. Annie Chambers kicked off the rally with a spirited message of support for the Palestinian struggle. Chambers is a public housing organizer with the Peoples Power Assembly.

The protest was initiated by the Palestinian Youth Movement and endorsed by groups including the Peoples Power Assembly and Youth Against War and Racism.

**In WASHINGTON • In DEARBORN 4-5
World Federation of Trade Unions solidarity 5**

el's U.S.-financed Iron Dome rocket system. Each Iron Dome interceptor launched by Israel costs the U.S. \$50,000. When the blood flows, the money flows.

Netanyahu and other Zionist politicians know that the more they bomb and kill, the more money they will get from Washington.

Palestine has a right to exist and defend itself

Washington and the occupation regime in Tel Aviv share a common goal: to crush the Palestinian Resistance. They want to terrorize the Palestinian people into giving up their own right to exist, to accept a Western colonial settler state occupying their land.

But 73 years of murder and terror have not achieved that goal. They did not succeed this time either.

Indeed, the Palestinian people's resistance, from Gaza's homemade rockets and mortars to mass protests and a general strike across all of Palestine, forced Israel's cabinet

► In Our Own Name

► U.S. passenger trains

► CHINA and COVID-19

► BELARUS

► Pablo Hasel on freedom



► COLOMBIA

► Jesús Santrich ¡Presente!

Continued on page 4

Were new attacks on China created in a Trump lab?

By Scott Scheffer

May 29 — This week the level of attacks on China regarding its success against COVID-19 has been elevated to a fever pitch. The Biden administration has all the major U.S. media in tow.

A pack of Cold War-style lies targeting a laboratory in Wuhan, China, has been picked up and made “credible” by the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, National Public Radio and others. Headlines across the internet refer to a previously discredited theory conjured up by the Trump administration as having “gone mainstream.”

When viewed in the context of the growing U.S. military presence near China’s territorial waters, the ratcheting up of propaganda is ominous.

Until recently, the anti-China slanders about the Wuhan lab and other lies and attacks have been kept alive by an exclusively right-wing cast of characters led by Trump’s Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and including the likes of Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas — who had also called for sending in troops to put down and “quarter” [kill] Black Lives Matter protesters — and others.

China, with four times the population of the U.S., held its death toll from the coronavirus to less than 5,000 through a “people’s war” against the virus that showcased the superiority of socialist planning over the anarchy of capitalism. Trump and his team used attacks on China to try to distract from the fact that his administration allowed the pandemic to take hundreds of thou-

sands of lives in the U.S.

The conspiratorial “lab leak” theory that became a central part of Trump’s narrative has now been revived with the support of Joe Biden’s White House. The theory goes that the origin of the virus that causes COVID-19 was not natural but created by researchers in the Wuhan Institute for Virology (WIV) laboratory and then leaked in an accident. In some versions it was unleashed in a purposeful germ warfare attack.

No one in Wuhan lab had COVID

All of the recent hype is anchored on a “fact sheet” penned by Trump’s vile neo-Cold Warrior, former Secretary of State Pompeo. Pompeo referenced U.S. intelligence “information” that claimed WIV staff were sickened and hospitalized in November 2019, a month before the earliest known case of COVID-19.

The story isn’t substantiated in any way. All of the staff at the Wuhan Institute were tested and there was no presence of COVID antibodies in anyone. This simple fact shows the lab leak hypothesis to be a sham.

There have been two delegations sent to Wuhan by the World Health Organization (WHO) to research the origin of the virus. The first was early in the pandemic and the second was in March of this year. Both concluded that the virus likely jumped from bats to an intermediary animal and then to humans, and that the lab leak theory was “highly unlikely.”

During the Trump administration, major media had to some extent been dismissive of the slanderous attacks and had treated its propagators as

peddlers of a precarious conspiracy theory. But the tone began to change as Biden’s new Secretary of State Antony Blinken signaled that the diplomatic assaults on China would continue unchanged from the previous Trump administration.

This week the floodgates opened, and it was an all-out media assault on China. On May 27, Biden ordered further “investigation” into the origin of the virus — not by scientists but by the same spy agencies that fabricated the infamous “weapons of mass destruction” story used to justify the horrible U.S. war against Iraq in the George W. Bush era.

Wuhan lab leading virus research globally

The WIV lab has been a global leader in research on coronaviruses. Since the first SARS coronavirus outbreak in 2003, it has collected hundreds of viral samples from bats to further the study of how viruses mutate and what mutations may create a higher possibility of transfer to humans. The hope is that the research could help in the development of vaccines and allow scientists to gain an edge in fighting future pandemics.

The lead scientist at the WIV is Zhengli Shi, famously known as the Bat Woman for her devotion to this field of study.

The New York Times’ contribution to the slander includes an exceptionally long article written by its disgraced former science reporter Nicholas Wade. Wade was the subject of an anti-racist outcry over his 2014 book that drew on the white-su-

premacist Bell Curve theory. That hasn’t stopped the Times from trotting him out from time to time, and they tapped him to help push the current attacks on China.

Wade accuses National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Anthony Fauci of helping China in a supposed cover-up of a lab leak. He hangs his hat on the fact that the intermediate animal that is crucial to the natural origin hypothesis hasn’t been found, citing the quick success in doing so only in the SARS and MERS outbreaks, even though it took much longer to trace that pathway and identify the intermediary animal in many other viral outbreaks. In his claim that WIV researchers created the virus, he attributes scientific abilities to the researchers that just don’t exist.

The journal Science published a letter by a group of 18 scientists also trying to give credibility to the lab leak theory. All of the scientists are from imperialist countries or other countries that have already been taking part in the U.S.-led hostility toward China.

The Chinese Embassy in Washington posted a response to Biden’s call for investigation that said: “Some political forces have been fixated on political manipulation and the blame game.”

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian has demanded an investigation into the work conducted at the U.S. biolab in Ft. Detrick, Md., which is surrounded by secrecy. Zhao said that Biden’s order showed that the U.S. “does not care about facts and truth, nor is it interested in serious scientific origin tracing.”

What happened to U.S. passenger trains?

By Stephen Millies

People around the world celebrate May Day as the international workers’ holiday. This past May 1st was also the 50th anniversary of Amtrak, the U.S. government’s passenger train system.

Until the coronavirus pandemic, Amtrak’s 20,000 employees carried almost 32 million passengers annually. The railroad’s Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, D.C., and a few other lines offer frequent service.

But for most people in the United States passenger trains are just a memory.

That’s a shame and a special burden for elderly and disabled people. Although airline and other transportation workers try to be as helpful as possible, passenger trains have more room than either planes or buses. They’re wheelchair accessible.

Of all the big capitalist countries, only Canada has a similar lack of passenger trains. The European and Japanese rail systems are renowned for frequent and fast trains. India’s railroads carry 12 million passengers daily.

Then there’s the socialist People’s Republic of China, which has more miles of high-speed train lines than the rest of the world combined.

President Richard Nixon signed



Amtrak workers in New York protested threatened layoffs in 2018.

the bill that established the National Passenger Railroad Corporation on May 1, 1971. Nixon’s father was a motorman on the old Pacific Electric transit system in Southern California. But the Watergate war criminal who was murdering Black Panther Party leaders like Fred Hampton wasn’t known to be a train buff.

Amtrak was set up to bail out the Penn Central railroad system. Its 20,000 miles of track dominated rail service in the Northeastern and Midwestern states. Auto, steel and other industries depended on it.

The Pennsylvania and New York Central railroads combined to form Penn Central on Feb. 1, 1968. It was the biggest corporate merger up to that time. Penn Central was the sixth biggest U.S. corporation and largest transportation company.

And when Penn Central declared insolvency on June 21, 1970, it was the largest bankruptcy in history un-

til the crooked Enron utility empire went under in 2001. Penn Central’s bankruptcy threatened to tank Goldman Sachs and many other banks.

Amtrak was started to save Penn Central from losing millions by operating 35 percent of the country’s passenger trains. This included commuter train operations serving Boston, New York City and Philadelphia.

The only way Congress could be persuaded to set up Amtrak was if there were some trains to serve the rest of the country, too. Passenger train service had already shrunk enormously since the mid-1950s.

Revenues from carrying the mail subsidized many trains. President Lyndon Johnson’s action in sending first class mail via the airlines was fatal. The Santa Fe — now part of the BNSF railway — immediately filed to abandon its trains linking California and Texas with Chicago.

Cutbacks are a train wreck

Starting Amtrak resulted in cutting half of the remaining passenger trains. Thousands of railroad workers lost their jobs.

Amtrak has only one train between New York City and Chicago. Back in 1953, the New York Central ran seven daily trains between the two cities while the Pennsylvania had six. More trains to the Windy City left from the Erie, Jersey Central and Lackawanna terminals across

the Hudson River.

It wasn’t just jet planes and the interstate highway system that killed passenger trains. The ruling class didn’t need them anymore.

Workers couldn’t afford the fare on famous all-Pullman sleeping car trains like the New York Central’s “20th Century Limited” or the Pennsylvania’s “Broadway Limited.” It was the prosperous few who rode these palaces on wheels with delicious meals prepared in the dining cars by Black chefs.

Capitalists dumped these trains. What did they need Pullmans for when they could jet around the world and stay in hotel suites? The super-rich also went from owning private railroad cars to having their own jets.

Ending passenger service went hand-in-hand with cutting railroad employment from 1.4 million workers in 1947 to around 200,000 today. At least 50,000 miles of track have been abandoned.

For decades the Association of American Railroads attacked safety rules, claiming workers were being coddled. The AAR bosses called these absolutely necessary regulations “feather bedding.”

Crew sizes were cut in both the U.S. and Canada. An inevitable result was 47 people killed in the 2013 train

Continued on page 6

At last!

The Million Worker March Movement in print

By Cheryl LaBash

Mobilizing in Our Own Name: Million Worker March

An anthology by Clarence Thomas

DeClare Publishing

MillionWorkerMarch.com

Available at most booksellers

Although I began to write a review of this remarkable anthology as a literary and historical assessment, it is much more than that to me. It is personal.

Clarence Thomas — the “real” Clarence Thomas, labor leader and author — tells an amusing story of his conflicted reaction when he heard some Detroiter appropriated the Million Worker March (MWM) T-shirt design and made T-shirts!

That was me. Just weeks away from the Million Worker March on Oct. 17, 2004, the Detroit Labor Day Parade and Labor Fest gathered hundreds of workers — our audience — in one place. But the official T-shirts couldn’t get here in time to deck out the distribution team. In the spirit of MWM, we forged ahead. No T-shirts, no problem — we made a few to wear for the day.

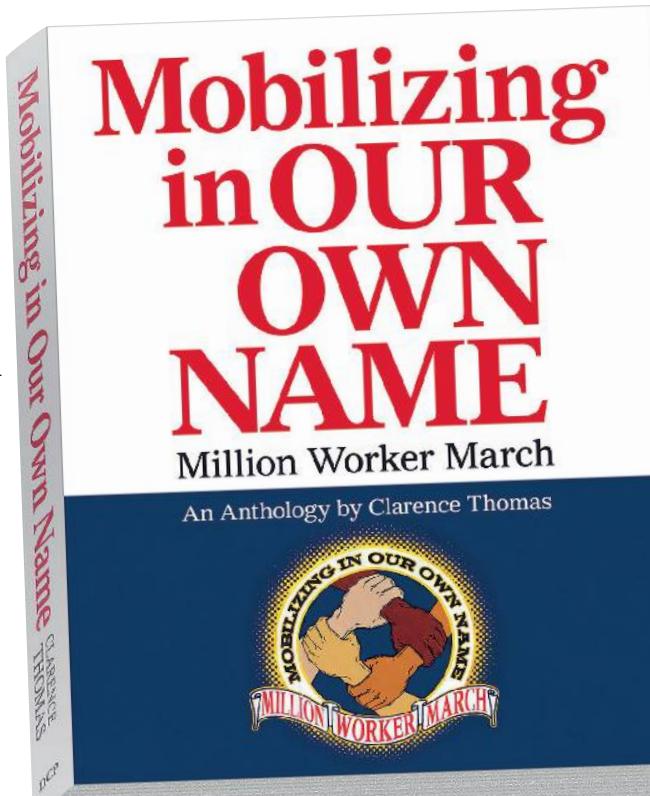
What drew me so intensely to the MWM? Only when I was present at the Lincoln Memorial on that day did I understand. It was the only time since my first national march in Washington, D.C. — against the Vietnam War in 1967 — that the hard-hat, overalls and work boots I wore meant something more than a way to earn a paycheck, to pay the bills so I could do political organizing.

Being a worker counted; our independent voice, unfiltered through capitalist party politicians, counted in the Million Worker March Movement.

Looking back now, through these pages, pictures and documents, the MWM was our movement’s equivalent of a Midwestern spring crocus pushing through the snow of the remnants of the Cold War, McCarthy red-scare and post-9/11 Patriot Act.

A harbinger of upsurge

I think we can say MWM’s independent voice was a harbinger of the upsurge reflected in the electoral arena through the wide, unexpected enthusiasm for Bernie Sanders’ unapologetically socialist campaign in 2016. When the facade of U.S. democracy overrode the desire for progressive change, the imperialist business-as-usual Democratic Party pro-war corporate candidates were



Cheryl LaBash in 2015.



rejected, saddling the world with wannabe fascistic emperor Trump.

The striving for progressive change thwarted in 2016 was renewed in the unprecedented mass movement throughout pandemic summer 2020. Justice was demanded for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many more, but also deeper systemic justice. It burst through in over 2,000 cities and towns in all 50 states with as many as 26 million U.S. participants.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 and MWM organizing and leadership in action against police brutality and murders foreshadowed this development, too.

In 2010, ILWU Local 10 shut down Bay Area ports for justice for Oscar Grant, and on May Day 2015 with the union action to stop police killings of Black and Brown people.

For me, the example of ILWU founder and leader Harry Bridges uniting with the San Francisco Black community to take control of the waterfront jobs echoes October 10, 1868, in Cuba, when Carlos Manuel de Céspedes freed enslaved Black workers, asking them to join in the fight for Cuban independence. More than a winning strategy, it is fundamental.

This was the key to winning the 1934 San Francisco General Strike, forging the ILWU with Black workers at its militant core, and Local 10 where the Million Worker March was born.

Centrality of Black workers

The settler-colonial crimes underpinning the United States of America can no longer be denied. The false concept of white supremacy is condemned publicly even from the presidential lectern.

The centrality of Black workers is one of two historical components of the ILWU that made the MWM possible. The other is the rank-and-file character of the ILWU. The ILWU survived the McCarthy era, refused anti-communism and the Taft-Hartley “loyalty” oaths to capitalism.

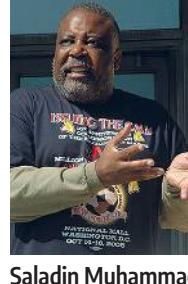


Clarence Thomas

MWMM in Japan 2016



Leo Robinson



Saladin Muhammad



Chryse Glacklin

Brenda Stokely holding Kalola.



Trent Willis



Angela Davis on Juneteenth at the Port of Oakland 2020.



Tatiana and Oscar Grant



Today Black workers, Latinx and Indigenous peoples and women lead the pivotal working-class social justice movements of our time. The Bessemer, Ala., organizing drive at Amazon; fast food workers fighting for \$15 and a union; nurses and health-care workers demanding COVID-19 personal protective equipment and safe staffing, challenging the corporate sickness-for-profit health industry.

Workers and social movements are pressing against systemic boundaries as the MWM showed us in 2004.

Million Worker March's influence

Although this book is about one initiative, one time in history, it has influenced or been part of all the major struggles in the nearly 20 years since MWM organizing began: from advances in understanding gender, to migrant and immigrant struggles, to solidarity with Palestine, international solidarity against war from Venezuela to Iraq, to the pandemic.

“*Mobilizing in Our Own Name*” is the story of the Million Worker March, but it is also very much the reflection of the life of a third-generation longshoreman and his family that is intertwined with the struggles, social fabric and political history of Oakland, Calif., and the Black freedom movement.

We thank the REAL Clarence Thomas for sharing with new and old generations this remarkable history and labor of love.



During the strike, black longshoremen are recruited into the ILA for the first time. Racial unity is key to the strike's success and becomes a guiding principle of the union. After the strike, Bridges states that if only two longshore workers are left on the docks, one would be black and the other white.

San Francisco General Strike in 1934



Gloria Verdieu, Delores Lemon-Thomas at the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange Conf. 2008.



Chris Silvera speaking in Union Square, NYC, 2021.



The Million Worker March at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., Oct. 17, 2004.

Washington, D.C.



March for Palestine pours through streets

May 15 — Thousands of Palestinians and their supporters from the region poured into Washington, D.C., protesting Israel's latest attacks on Gaza. Speakers and those marching decried the death of children and the U.S. government's financial support of Israel. Marchers rallied at the Washington Monument and then marched to the Capitol. The Palestinian Youth Movement called the protest.

SLL PHOTOS: RASIKA RUWANPATHIRANA

Palestinian people fight for freedom U.S. funds occupation and murder



Palestinians in Haifa on May 18 in a nationwide general strike.

Continued from page 1
to declare a ceasefire.

Resistance defeated occupation

While Israel's precision-guided missiles targeted Palestinian families, Gaza's improvised weapons paralyzed the occupation regime's economy. "Tel Aviv, Israel's Bustling Financial Hub, is Shaken as Rockets Rain Down," the New York Times reported on May 16.

Palestinian rockets set Israel's Eilat to Ashkelon Pipeline ablaze. The pipeline is key to a U.S.-Israeli plan to transport Arabian oil to the Mediterranean Sea across occupied Palestinian land.

Rocket fire closed Israel's main airport and made commercial airlines cancel flights to occupied Palestine. "Violence Raises Questions Over Israel's Tourism Plans," U.S. News & World Report wrote May 21. It will also take a toll on Tel Aviv's real estate boom.

U.S. military personnel stationed in Palestine were evacuated to Cyprus.

The U.S. pays for all of Israel's bombs and weapons. Yet the Israeli newspaper Yedioth Achronoth said the fighting cost the Zionist state's economy \$37 million a day.

Palestinian workers shut racist state down

Perhaps most powerful of all, Palestinian workers, including those inside the 1948 borders, launched a massive general strike May 18.

"The Israel Builders Association said Palestinian workers had observed the strike, with only 150 of the 65,000 Palestinian construction workers coming to work in Israel," Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported. "This paralyzed building sites, causing losses estimated at 130 million shekels (nearly \$40 million)."

"But even before the strike, since

the beginning of the operation in Gaza, only 6,000 to 8,000 Palestinians were coming to work every day. According to Yehuda Katav, vice president of the builder's association, construction has slowed to a snail's pace. 'We cannot build without them,' he said."

The Israeli state is also increasingly isolated, as pro-Palestine protests swept the world. In Italy and South Africa, dockworkers refused to unload Israeli cargo.

Gaza's Palestinians have a right to go home

Who are the people of Gaza that they are so hated by the Israeli occupation regime and its financiers in Washington? The majority are the children and grandchildren of Palestinians who once lived a few miles to the north, in cities and villages that are now called "Israeli." They were forced from their homes at gunpoint in 1948 to make room for settlers from Europe.

When Gaza was under direct Israeli occupation, from 1967 to 2005, their labor built the luxury hotels and condos that line the Mediterranean coast, many of which are now second homes for settlers from the United States.

Like all Palestinians, the people of Gaza want the right to live in peace and freedom on their own land. This is a "crime" in the eyes of the Israeli occupation regime and its paymasters in Washington.

Wall Street profits off Palestine's blood

The paid corporate agents in Washington fund the war against Palestine for the same reason they bombed and invaded Iraq, Libya and Syria and support Saudi mass murderer in Yemen: profit.

The Pentagon brass routinely refer to the settler state in Palestine as



Photos above, Washington, D.C., May 15

their "unsinkable aircraft carrier," a phrase repeated by Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and other Zionist leaders. They see Israel as an "asset" in their endless war to control the world's energy reserves and keep the region's petrodollars flowing to U.S. banks and corporations. It is their forward base to attack Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Iran and other countries that don't pay tribute to Wall Street.

U.S. energy giant Chevron corporation steals natural gas from the waters off occupied Palestine. ExxonMobil is also exploring Palestine's waters. Citigroup loans the occupation regime money to buy arms until the next U.S. aid package comes through. The bank is a major inves-

tor in occupied Palestine.

Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and the rest of the U.S. military-industrial complex see the war machine called Israel as their best advertisement. Their stocks soar when the bombs fall.

We must fight for an end to the endless flow of U.S. arms and dollars to the Israeli war machine! End the \$11-million-a-day in military aid, the loan guarantees, the tax exemptions, the U.S.-Israel Free Trade Agreement and the other myriad ways with which the U.S. corporate ruling class props up the Israeli occupation regime.

We need money to build homes, schools and hospitals, not destroy them. □

Dearborn greets Biden — NOT

By Cheryl LaBash

Detroit, May 18 — When President Joe Biden's schedulers agreed to have him visit Ford's new electric F-150 pickup truck production line just ahead of its public unveiling, it must have seemed like a home run for the administration's infrastructure plan. But today's news here was about Palestine.

Biden's visit coincided with a Palestinian Day of Action and general strike in Israel and the occupied territories against the murderous Israeli bombing of Gaza, the racist anti-Arab gangs fully supported by Biden and his administration, complete with a \$735-million proposed weapons sale to the apartheid state.

And his speech was at a factory in the middle of the largest concentration of Arab people in the U.S. The only Palestinian member of Congress represents the district just two blocks away from the venue. Representatives Rashida Tlaib and Debbie Dingell even met Biden at the airport to personally discuss U.S. Palestine policy.

A few thousand demonstrators chanting "Free Palestine!" gathered across the street from Ford Motors World Headquarters in Dearborn, Mich., at 1 p.m. today, timed to coincide with Biden's speech at the historic Ford Rouge F-150 factory. The day's unity of Iraqis, Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Kashmiris, Yemenis and many other nationalities

was recognized from the stage, as well as a chant that "Black lives matter."

But this was only one action. Just blocks from Ford's "green" plant venue for Biden's speech, a 10 a.m. news conference was held in the neighborhood mosque. Later, demonstrators rallied and marched in the working-class Arab community bordering Detroit.

Banners were dropped over the I-94 freeway. They read: "Sanction Israel Now" and "Biden: End U.S. Aid to Israel & Invest in Communities — \$3.8 Billion/Yr."

More demonstrations are planned. See more details and photos at Arab-American News. □



Dearborn, Mich., May 18.



Los Angeles, May 22



SLL PHOTOS



Queens, New York, May 22

World Federation of Trade Unions affirms Solidarity with Palestinian people

By Lev Koufax

On May 18, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) held an emergency international zoom conference in support of the Palestinian people. Present on this call were progressive labor activists from over 150 countries, including Venezuela, South Africa, Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Greece and Palestine itself.

The call opened with WFTU President Mzwandile Michael Makwayiba of the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union of South

Africa. President Makwayiba emphasized the importance of global labor unions standing in unflinching solidarity with Palestine against Israeli apartheid and genocide.

George Mavrikos, WFTU General Secretary, gave the keynote address. Mavrikos made clear that not only does WFTU denounce the current Israeli occupation and bombing campaign in Palestine, but also condemns Israel's existence.

The message of the inspiring WFTU call was clear: All unionists and workers must fight to liberate Palestine now! □



Evansville, Ind. May 15

SLL PHOTO: BRANDON HARRIS

Pablo Hasél: Repentance is not freedom

By Pablo Hasél

In February, Spain's Supreme Court sentenced leftist Catalan musician Pablo Hasél to 2 years and 9 months in prison for his outspoken activism against the monarchy, fascist movements and police terror. Later, the court added 16 months to his sentence for non-payment of a fine. Read more about Pablo Hasél's case at tinyurl.com/y3hv9y4m.

As soon as they imposed the additional 16-month sentence for telling proven facts about the monarchy and

police brutality, the prison psychologist came to offer me a treatment program to be able to access the third degree permits that they give to the majority of prisoners (once a quarter of the sentence has been served). These permits consist of leaving prison for a few hours, then a few days, and thus progressively shortening the sentence. But they are not in exchange for nothing, especially in the case of political prisoners for whom "reintegration" means jumping through hoops by denying the just and necessary struggle for

which we were kidnapped.

The psychologist, extorting me with a long stay in prison if I did not accept, intended to strip me of my principles by making me accept this insulting program based on "reviewing my expressions and emotions" to "empathize with the victims" of armed self-defense — a dishonest regret that from the first day I made very clear that I will never assume.

Therefore, I replied that I was being disrespected and that if I am incarcerated, it is precisely because



PHOTO: INSURGENTE

I have great empathy with the real victims of the oppressors' terrorism. They do not hesitate to impose all kinds of criminal policies, misery, exploitation and lack of freedoms with armed force. My response was

Continued on page 6

Belarus detains neo-Nazi and imperialists howl

By Greg Butterfield

On May 23, Roman Protasevich was detained by authorities in the eastern European country Belarus after the plane he was riding made an emergency landing in Minsk. Protasevich's detention set off howls of protest from governments and corporate media in the U.S. and European Union, as well as threats of sanctions and a ban on air travel to or from Belarus.

The arrest of Protasevich, who was earlier declared a terrorist threat by the Belarus government, is being presented as "Exhibit A" of President Alexander Lukashenko's abuse of human rights, and in favor of regime change by the pro-Western opposition headed by Svetlana Tikhanovskaya.

The EU has announced a \$3-billion "bailout" plan for Belarus if the opposition successfully topples Lukashenko's government.

A few key facts are missing from the Western powers' narrative.

Who gets to divert flights?

First, the diversion of flights and detention of air passengers is hardly unprecedented.

Recall, for example, that a plane from Moscow carrying Bolivian President Evo Morales over EU airspace in 2013 was refused the right to refuel, threatening the life of Morales and other passengers, and was then grounded on U.S. orders in Vienna, where the plane was searched by Austrian authorities. Morales — a head of state — was detained for 14 hours.

Supposedly Washington thought that "wanted" NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden might be aboard the plane. But the real reason was to threaten Morales and other anti-imperialist leaders by showing them that the U.S. could murder or capture them at its whim.

In 2016, a Belarusian flight over

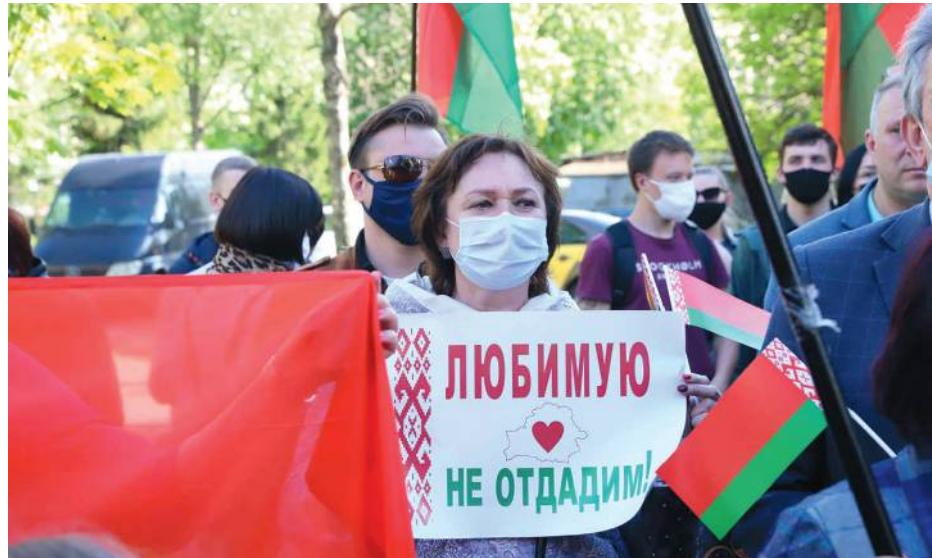


PHOTO: VYACHESLAV TSURANOV / MINSK PRAVDA

Belarus anti-fascists protest at the Latvian Embassy in Minsk, May 24.

Ukraine was forced to turn back because Kiev's right-wing government suspected anti-fascist supporters of Donetsk and Lugansk might be aboard. One person was detained before the plane was allowed to leave.

What is different in the Protasevich case — and objectionable to the imperialists — is that it was not done by them or a regime loyal to them.

Coup attempt thwarted

Second, just six weeks ago, in mid-April, a violent coup attempt against the government of Belarus was thwarted by Russian and Belarus intelligence services.

Two people were arrested in Moscow after opposition figures were captured on video plotting to murder President Lukashenko and his sons, and kill or detain 30 top officials. One of those arrested was a U.S. citizen. The coup attempt received virtually no coverage in the U.S. media.

The plot came after the failure of protests dominated by far-right and pro-Western forces last year to unseat Lukashenko's government.

The Western powers' objections to Lukashenko's government have

nothing to do with "human rights," but rather that this former Soviet republic has retained some of the social gains of the socialist period. Belarus has not privatized fast enough and has maintained too much independence for their liking.

Who is Roman Protasevich?

Third, and perhaps most damningly, there is Roman Protasevich himself.

Held up as an "independent journalist" by the West, he is in fact a known fascist who participated in the 2014 coup in neighboring Ukraine and aligned himself with neo-Nazis there waging war on the independent republics of Donetsk and Lugansk. He also has strong ties to the U.S. government.

Here's how Ukrainian anti-fascist activist and journalist Dmitri Kovalevich describes this character:

"In 2014 Roman Protasevich was one of the active participants of Euromaidan in Kiev. He participated in toppling Lenin's monument in Kiev along with the Ukrainian far-right and posed with the toppled statue.

"In 2015 [Protasevich] volunteered with Azov — a neo-Nazi Ukrainian regiment. He was trained there and fought against the Donbass republics. [He] was promoted to deputy commander of an Azov detachment. Then helped Azov to receive sponsorship from the U.S. and Poland.

"Now the team of imprisoned Russian liberal Alexei Navalny also supports Protasevich, claiming that there was nothing wrong in his

Pablo Hasél: Repentance is not freedom

Continued from page 5

to go to them and speak about the empathy they lack. That's too much for them. They imprison you for solidarity and above all they want you to pretend to empathize with those who oppress you! Wanting to control even our emotions is outright fascism. How delusional if they believe that I can stop feeling hatred against the oppressors who beat us in so many ways! It would be to stop feeling love for the oppressed.

The twisted blackmail focused on "you have to worry about yourself and take care of yourself," meaning that this is only possible if I agree to spend less time in prison in exchange for crawling. As if I could care for myself and take care of myself without being true to my conscience, which is the most valuable thing I possess! They don't understand that we revolutionaries are not driven by individualistic interests. We would feel much worse out on the street, having given them the repentance that their repression seeks, than in prison with our heads held high for continuing to defend our principles. This false concern for me is also offensive when they do not care about the dire conditions we suffer in prison or the unjust conviction. The only

thing they care about is taming you.

There are those who do not understand this consistent attitude in the face of repression, influenced by the opportunistic positions of domesticated organizations that do not pose any danger to the regime. They encourage people with the idea that to get out of jail, anything goes. However, this strengthens the forces of repression, because not only do they get their enemies to delegitimize the struggle, but by recognizing that they have done wrong, it legitimizes them to repress others. To do that in the name of the struggle is intolerable.

Logically, I am the first one who wants to see myself out of jail, but not in any way or at any cost. Political prisoners must leave as we enter: revolutionary and unrepentant. If we are freed early, it is due to the pressure of solidarity and not by submitting. So if the struggle doesn't prevent it, I will have to serve the entire sentence, but I will not renounce my integrity. Leaving earlier by agreeing with them would be a victory for the state, a false freedom. We don't fight for that, but quite the opposite. That is what the demand for total amnesty includes: freedom of all political prisoners without any surrender.

Translated by Greg Butterfield

wreck in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec. A lone engineer was the only crew member on a long train of oil tank cars.

All transportation workers have been under attack. Deregulation and bankruptcy laws have been used to attack airline workers and the Teamsters union.

President Joe Biden has now proposed to invest billions in new passenger trains. That's a popular proposal.

Even some of the wealthy see the need to have more passenger service. They view it as part of renewing the capitalist infrastructure.

It's also an attempt to catch up with socialist China. We need what China has: train service for all.

The writer is a retired Amtrak worker.

fighting in the ranks of Azov because he 'helped to restore Ukraine's control over its territory.'

"In other words, we see in this case a 'lovely' company: Western powers, Belarus and Russian liberal opposition, and Ukraine's armed white supremacists."

Protasevich's affiliation with the ultra-right and servility to the Western imperialists is well-documented, including much photographic evidence of his open flaunting of neo-Nazi ties.

A U.S.-EU provocation?

The Western media and governments claim that the Ryanair flight from Athens to Vilnius was forced to land completely on the initiative of the Belarus government. However, there are reasons to question this story.

According to Belarus, the decision to land in Minsk came from the flight crew because of a bomb threat. A Belarus fighter plane was then dispatched to guide the plane into the airport.

No bomb was found aboard the plane. But authorities discovered there was in fact a wanted terrorist suspect aboard — Protasevich — and he was detained.

Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Makei described the subsequent outcry from Western capitals as a deliberate provocation.

The flight's city of destination is enough to create suspicions about the U.S.-EU narrative. Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, a NATO member ruled by a fascist-sympathizing government dominated by Washington, as is neighboring Baltic state Latvia.

As if on cue, after Protasevich was detained in Minsk, the mayor of Riga, Latvia's capital, ordered a display of flags at an international sports event in the city to replace the official red-and-green Belarus flag with the white-and-red "BCBH flag" — the flag of fascist collaborators during the Nazi occupation of Belarus during World War II. This was the flag waved at last year's anti-government protests.

Outraged Belarus residents quickly organized a rally at the Latvian Embassy in Minsk on May 24. Minsk Pravda correspondent Nadezhda Sablina reported:

"Belarusians ardently expressed their indignation and demanded the embassy staff answer, but they did not come out."

"Among the picket participants were members of the Patriots of Belarus, Belya Rusi, the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, the Communist Party of Belarus, the Liberal Democratic Party, ordinary citizens of our republic, and partisan veterans."

"Participants of the event sang 'Katyusha' [an anti-fascist Soviet song] and the anthem of Belarus, and chanted 'Fascism will not pass!' and 'Shame!'

"Right there, near the Latvian Embassy, the audience voted to bring the mayor of Latvia to justice."

Workers and oppressed people here and around the world have good reasons to question the claims of the imperialists — and to support the struggle of people in Belarus to maintain their independence and keep their country from being turned into another weapon for U.S. imperialism. ■

Colombia's blood on U.S. hands: National strike marches on

By Greg Butterfield

May 27 — Jhon Erik Larrahondo, 21, of Cali. Alison Meléndez, 17, of Popayán. Camilo Arango, 19, of Tuluá.

These are but a few of more than 60 victims confirmed dead of government terrorism against protesters by the U.S.-armed and funded Colombian Armed Forces, police and death squads since the national uprising against the regime of President Ivan Duque began on April 28.

Thousands have been arrested. Hundreds more have "disappeared" — and bodies have begun to turn up, washed up on the banks of rivers and buried in hastily-dug mass graves.

Colombia is called the Israel of Latin America, and like its counterpart in West Asia, the country's brutal capitalist rulers loyally serve their masters in Washington, D.C. Colombia is a member of the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance — the only one in Latin America.

The elite Mobile Anti-Riot Squad (ESMAD) of the Colombian National Police — established on the initiative of U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1999 to repress leftist movements — is carrying out murders, police brutality, sexual assaults, and, in the style of its Israeli Defense Force trainers, has blinded numerous protesters with shots to the eyes.

In Cali, the epicenter of state violence, a warehouse owned by the Exito Supermarket chain stands revealed as a bloody torture center.

"When human rights organizations were finally able to enter to do oversight, they found pools of blood in the underground parking lots, blood even on electrical appliances in the warehouse, a nauseating smell. And they were totally prevented from visiting one of the floors of the parking lot," accord-

ing to reports compiled by Resumen Latinamericano.

"For two days, live protesters were brought to this shopping center, families and the community denounced in anguish, shouts were heard, repressive forces and garbage trucks circulated incessantly." As of May 23, more than 200 people have disappeared in Cali alone.

In a statement demanding an end to the disappearances, the Legal and Humanitarian Team of the Inter-Church Justice and Peace Commission reported: "Since May 14, the first reports of the existence of mass graves were known in the rural area of the municipalities of Buga and Yumbo, where [the police] would take the bodies of many young people from Cali."

"Since the start of the strike, the Colombian State has kidnapped and disappeared more than 600 people," Resumen reported. "Some of them have appeared floating in the Cauca River, others buried. In recent days the police have been increasing the practice of enforced disappearance, taking away protesters who then do not reappear."

Duque, assassin!

President Duque and the media label the protesters "terrorists," even while his government draws out talks with some groups in the leadership of the national strike movement, including the National Unemployment Committee (CNP) and Central Union of Workers (CUT).

Duque & Co. accuse Cuba and Venezuela, the FARC-EP and ELN guerrillas, even faraway Russia, of causing the uprising — anything, anyone but their own greedy, repressive policies that have left 42.5 percent of the people in poverty and a quarter unable to eat three meals a day, according to Colombia Informa.

The government decries protest roadblocks as an attack on human rights, even as its armed goons attack Indigenous groups working with protesters to ensure that food, fuel and medical assistance needed by the people can get through.

Even as his government assassinated the blind guerrilla Commander Jesús Santrich in neighboring Venezuela, in violation of international law, as a warning to those youth and workers who might move from rebellion to resistance, and take the path of social revolution.

Even as his government carries out crimes against humanity like those of Chile's dictator Augusto Pinochet, installed by the U.S. in 1973.

According to Resumen, human-rights groups are advising protesters: "It is very important that detainees try to shout their names and surnames and that people in the neighborhood film the events, to try to prevent those kidnapped by the police from being victims of the state crime of enforced disappearance."

And yet, amidst the terror, the people fight on.

Victories won in the streets

What began April 28 as a protest against the president's proposed tax hike on the populace, despite widespread unemployment caused by the pandemic and the global capitalist crisis, has mushroomed in the past four weeks into a national uprising that has left no city, town or village in this diverse country untouched.

The movement first forced the government to withdraw its "tax reform." Then, on May 19, it forced Congress to vote down a plan to further privatize the health care system. Now the national strike movement demands the firing of Defense Minister Diego Molano, who com-



PHOTO: MISIÓN VERDAD

'Colombia cries but does not surrender.'

mands the National Police.

A congressional debate on Molano's removal was broken up by the police on May 25.

Officials in Washington and Bogotá are betting on exhausting the people with merciless repression. But so far the protesters show no signs of slowing down, only drawing more and more layers of the populace into the streets.

In a development paralleling last year's Black Lives uprising in the U.S., a group called the Front Line Mothers has taken to the streets of the capital with shields to defend youthful protesters from police attacks.

Whatever happens next, it's clear that a new generation of activists has taken the stage in Colombia. Many of them are not content with piecemeal reforms, but want to see Duque's government — and those pulling the strings — toppled for good.

They have seen their rulers' betrayal of the 2016 Havana Peace Accords and subsequent slayings of hundreds of former guerrillas, activists and community leaders by right-wing death squads. They see clearly the bloody hand of U.S. imperialism directing, arming and financing their oppressors.

They are learning invaluable lessons, and many of those who survive will bring fresh energy and hard-won experience to Colombia's revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism. □

The assassination of Colombian revolutionary Jesús Santrich

By Greg Butterfield

When a respected revolutionary dies, the impact reverberates around the world. Or, as Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong said, "To die for the people is weightier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather."

Commander Jesús Santrich, a communist and member of the National Directorate of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), Second Marquetalia, died for the people.

Santrich was reportedly assassinated by a Colombian military squad on May 17. The killing took place on Venezuelan territory near the Colombian border.

After murdering Santrich, the killers cut off his left pinkie finger to verify his death (and collect a \$1.5-million bounty placed on his head jointly by the Colombian and U.S. governments), then fled back

into Colombian territory aboard a helicopter.

The assassination, carried out on another country's territory in blatant violation of international law, was reminiscent of a similar operation in 2008, when Colombian troops killed FARC Commander Raúl Reyes in Ecuador.

It came just four days after the Colombian Supreme Court ruled in favor of Santrich's extradition to the United States. His fellow FARC Commander Simón Trinidad has been held incommunicado since his extradition to the U.S. at the end of 2004. Political prisoner Trinidad is currently serving a 60-year sentence in a Colorado supermax prison.

"The court carries out the orders of the gringos," Santrich said in a statement released the day before his death.

It's no coincidence that the court ruling and assassination took place during Colombia's unprecedented month-long popular uprising



Commander Jesús Santrich after his release from prison in 2019.

He was a leader of the Bolivarian Continental Movement (MCB), an alliance of revolutionary parties and movements in South America.

An internationalist to the core, Santrich was usually seen wearing a keffiyeh as a symbol of solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Israeli apartheid regime plays a big role in training and steering Colombia's repressive forces, as directed by the United States, and Santrich felt the connection with Palestine's struggle deeply.

Santrich was legally blind from a young age and walked with the aid of a cane. But his disability was no match for his revolutionary determination. After joining the FARC in the early 1990s, he quickly proved himself a capable organizer and strategist, and gained the rank of commander.

His closest friends and comrades, who called him Trichi, spoke of his

A fighter for the people

Jesús Santrich was one of the most renowned revolutionaries in Latin America, a popular and influential spokesperson for revolutionary Marxism and the path of armed struggle.

Continued on page 8

No existe barrera que pueda detener la marcha de las Mujeres del Mundo

Por Samantha Sánchez

Con la participación de hasta 100 mujeres, se llevó a cabo el Encuentro Mundial de Mujeres este 24 de mayo, desde la sede de Compañía Anónima Nacional Teléfonos de Venezuela (CANTV), en Caracas Venezuela. Gladys Requena, integrante de la Comisión Nacional del Congreso Bicentenario de los Pueblos como responsable del sector mujer, dio la bienvenida a mujeres de todos los países que se reunieron para la lectura del documento final preliminar, debatido y construido durante los encuentros previos del sector, por la visibilización del género femenino, en reconocimiento de su esfuerzo y defensa de sus derechos.

Durante este encuentro mundial en línea, se socializó con mujeres de los 5 continentes la declaración final del sector, contentiva del análisis de la coyuntura internacional y su impacto en las mujeres, las banderas de lucha acordadas en el Foro de Sao Paulo y ratificadas en el Congreso Mundial de Mujeres realizados en Venezuela entre 2018 y 2019 y en los encuentros de mujeres realizados en el marco del CBPM a celebrarse en Venezuela entre el 21 y el 24 de junio de 2021; Así como el plan de trabajo mundial y la propuesta organizativa definitiva de la Red Internacional Antiimperialista de Articulación de Organizaciones de mujeres, de movimientos sociales y mujeres de partidos políticos de izquierda y propuestas de resoluciones de solidaridad. Gladys Requena informó que sería el documento presentado,



Mujeres de los 5 continentes presentaron los acuerdos alcanzados rumbo al Congreso Bicentenario de los Pueblos del Mundo.

el que marchará para su debate en el Congreso Bicentenario de los Pueblos del Mundo, pautado desde el 21 al 24 de Junio, del presente año y que seguirá abierto para los aportes que a bien deseen anexarle.

Por su parte Carolys Pérez, Coordinadora del Equipo Promotor Nacional del Congreso Bicentenario de los Pueblos del Mundo por el Sector de Mujeres, expresó ante los más de 40 movimientos sociales a nivel nacional e internacional, presentes en la lectura de esta hoja de trabajo "Estos llamados al encuentro, no son otra cosa sino justamente la reiteración y la invitación del combate que no es sencillo pero tampoco imposible, y que desde acá asumimos con la misma fuerza de hace 200 años, cuando nuestra in-

dependencia nos llevó también a visibilizar no solo la sangre, sino la estirpe del pueblo venezolano". Este documento contiene 13 puntos de vital importancia para orientar la lucha feminista, en el que sobresale la Red Internacional de Comunicación; proyecto que apuesta por un equipo de Mujeres que serán puerto informativo, para la actualización de cada avance y acción elaborada por sus respectivos países, en conjunto con las hermanas revolucionarias. Sobre este proyecto se enfatizó que será el centro de unión, que entrelazará a todas las mujeres activistas, en el desenvolvimiento de sus progresos.

Terminada la lectura del documento y durante las intervenciones se analizó el panorama internacional haciendo enfoque en Puerto Rico,

que hoy combate el arrebato de sus tierras, que son compradas contra la voluntad de su gente por gringos que ignoran la realidad que les rodea, y son favorecidos por las leyes del país, las cuales denuncian firmemente, deben ser reformadas. Las participantes enviaron mensajes de agradecimiento, saludos cargados de motivación y emoción por permitir el punto de encuentro y trabajo que hoy realizan unidas de las manos.

Desde Colombia se fijo postura de rechazo al gobierno colombiano, ante la violación de los derechos ciudadanos durante las protestas, por las muertes y violencia causadas en manos de los cuerpos de "seguridad", que deberían proteger al pueblo y velar por la garantía de sus necesidades, como hermanos, como iguales, y así mismo se hizo un llamado a la solidaridad, al entendimiento y al cese del uso de la fuerza bruta.

Traspasando las barreras de la distancia, se dieron un abrazo fraternal y sintieron como propio el dolor de la otra y del otro. Manifestaron que no existen diferencias entre las mujeres, no existe barrera étnica que pueda detener al batallón femenino, que marcha en busca de justicia. Por Venezuela, por Puerto Rico, por Colombia, por Chile, Palestina... Por cada país cercano o lejano, son las mujeres quienes abogan por la liberación, por dar fin al neoliberalismo arrasador y egoísta. Las mujeres son el mañana de sus hijos, de su familia, del mundo que con el ímpetu de los proyectos trazados puede cambiar y debe ser transformado. □

The assassination of Colombian revolutionary Jesús Santrich

Continued from page 7

humor, thirst for knowledge and wide-ranging interests. Santrich played the saxophone, composed poetry, and painted despite his visual impairment.

He was also a prolific author. At the time of his death, Santrich was writing a series of articles on the relationship between Marxism and Bolivarianism, the national-liberation outlook uniting peoples across Latin America.

U.S.-Colombia betray peace accords

Santrich was a member of the team that negotiated the 2016 Havana Peace Accords between the government of Colombia and the FARC-EP. While working for several years in Cuba on the peace agreement, Santrich met and befriended many visiting activists and revolutionaries from around the world.

As the negotiations dragged on and pressure for a resolution grew, Santrich and fellow negotiator Iván Márquez warned that the FARC should not agree to disarm before the Colombian regime met its obligations. However, they were overruled.

When Santrich returned to Colombia, it quickly became apparent to him that Duque's government and its Washington masters had no in-

tention of honoring the Havana Accords, using them only as an excuse to disarm and divide the guerrilla movement.

Santrich himself, though guaranteed a seat in Congress and legal immunity under the agreement, was thrown into prison on false "drug trafficking" charges. He was held in torturous, life-threatening conditions.

A mass movement fought for and won his release. But the threat of extrajudicial killing or extradition to the U.S. still loomed.

Santrich went underground. In August 2019, Santrich, Márquez and others announced the formation of the FARC-EP, Second Marquetalia, an initiative to rebuild the revolutionary guerrilla movement following the betrayal of the peace agreement by Bogota and Washington.

"Either a slow death in a maximum security prison in some hot desert in the U.S., 30 meters underground, without any human rights, like his youthful friend, his fellow from Caribe Simón Trinidad, or shot down in a confrontation," wrote Alberto Pinzón Sánchez.

"With this perspective ... he returned to arms — this time a little more 'symbolically,' in order to accompany with his knowledge, ideas and far-seeing vision, a group of former comrades who shared with

him the idea that it was better to die fighting counterinsurgent fascism than kneel before the perfidy and deceptions of the regime."

Death squads kill former guerrillas

Between the signing of the Havana Accords in 2016 and April 2021, at least 271 former FARC guerrillas were murdered by right-wing death squads, along with hundreds of community activists, student leaders, trade unionists, journalists and representatives of the Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

Santrich had seen it before.

As a student activist in the late 1980s and early 1990s, young Seuxis Pausias participated in organizing the Patriotic Union movement, an earlier attempt to transform the decades-long civil war and build a powerful social-justice alternative to the political parties dominated by Colombia's oligarchy and U.S. imperialism.

Then, too, the response of Colombia's ruling class, big landlords and U.S. backers was to unleash death squads to exterminate their political opponents.

In fact, Seuxis Pausias's close friend, a fellow student leader, was one of those executed in 1991. He took the name of his slain friend — Jesús Santrich — in tribute, and left to join the guerrillas.

"Was it necessary to execute a blind revolutionary militant?" asked Argentinian revolutionary Néstor Kohan. "Were the U.S. Pentagon, the Israeli Army and the Colombian Armed Forces so afraid of a blind person who walked with a cane?

"Yes, they were afraid of him. And now that he's dead ... they are going to be even more afraid, because the unwavering example of this communist revolutionary will surely take on other dimensions, as happened in their time with Camilo Torres, Che Guevara and with so many other revolutionaries of Our America."

In his honor, the Bolivarian Continental Movement has declared May 17 the "International Day of Global Insurgence Against Decadent and Criminal Imperialism."

¡Comandante Jesús Santrich, presente! □

STRUGGLE ★ LA LUCHA
for Socialism / por el Socialismo